

Appendix 2: Gilbert Ryle Collections in Oxford

In this appendix I shall describe collections of Ryle material which I found or rediscovered in various places in Oxford. The ‘Gilbert Ryle Collection’ at Linacre College is by far the largest one. Some of the others are but minor collections, sometimes consisting of no more than a few sheets of paper, but as they are virtually unknown to the scholarly world, I list these too. This list, however, is not complete as more material is likely to turn up.

Minor Ryle Collections Outside Linacre College

The New Bodleian, Oxford

One of the most valuable sources is the Ryle-Collingwood Correspondence, which is kept in the New Bodleian as part of the Collingwood legacy. The handwritten letters as well as typescripts of them – not in all respects accurate – are available upon request at the Modern Papers Room. The correspondence was still unpublished when I started studying it in 2002, but it has now been published (Connelly and D’Oro 2005). On this correspondence see Chapter 5 of my thesis.

Besides the Ryle-Collingwood Correspondence, the New Bodleian keeps other documents of a biographical rather than philosophical nature.

- 1) MS Eng. C. 2714 is a paper by a Mr Morgan about the history of the Ryle family, focusing on their activities as bankers. The paper was presented at the 2nd European Congress of the International Banknote Society in London, on 7 May 1972, and the National Congress British Association of Numismatic Societies. Mr Morgan’s story about J.C. Ryle seems to have been unknown to Gilbert in 1970. Gilbert and a few of his brothers and nephews corresponded with Mr Morgan about the Ryle-family. Gilbert wrote a letter to Mr Morgan on 13 November 1970.
- 2) Top Oxon. C. 870, fol. 18-34, gives insight into the transfer of the Brentano Institute from Prague to Oxford right before the Second World War. See Chapter 1 for Ryle’s role in transferring the Brentano Institute from Prague to Oxford.

The Philosophy Library, Oxford

Other philosophically interesting documents can be found in the Philosophy Library. Apart from papers that have been published¹⁷⁶, which I shall not mention, the following documents can be found here:

- 1) a typescript of a conversation between J. O. Urmson, Brian Magee and Ryle. I have not been able to find out when this conversation took place. It is most likely a

¹⁷⁶ E.g. René Meyer published Ryle’s ‘The *Meno*’ and a paper read to the Oxford Philosophical Society 500th meeting in 1968 (Meyer 1993), both of which were kept in the Philosophy Library in Oxford.

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- typescript of a radio program or video recording, which could have been made by a philosophy student. Magee could not remember the conversation;
- 2) a paper by J. King Gordon, containing large quotations of letters from Ryle to him;
 - 3) a paper on Ryle as a teacher, by Professor Julius Moravcsik.

The first document is particularly interesting because Ryle makes some explicit remarks about his debts to Wittgenstein. The other two papers are of a more biographical nature.

Nuffield College, Oxford

As part of the Lord Cherwell Correspondence, Nuffield College keeps documents relating to Ryle's Intelligence work in the Second World War. The index of correspondents of Lord Cherwell contains three references to Gilbert Ryle (D219, F415 and G442)¹⁷⁷. From the beginning of the Nazi persecutions in 1933, Lord Cherwell – Frederick Alexander Lindemann (1886-1957) – took much trouble to help distinguished German Jewish scientists to find places in British Universities and to obtain grants. Holding the post of Paymaster-General, a ministerial post in Britain, from 1942-1945, he was Churchill's scientific adviser during the Second World War.

From the three letters written by Ryle it seems that he did not correspond with Lord Cherwell about finding places for German Jewish scientists at British universities, but rather about aircraft recognition and engagement of low flying aircrafts, as taught at the A.A. (Anti-aircraft) (L.M.G. – Light machine gun) School, Northolt. Clearly as a response to a letter from Lord Cherwell, one of the letters Ryle starts as follows:

I've not lost interest in my former activity, & send you the enclosed to bring to your mind some of the problems, technical & especially administrative, which face those who want to make the lower air unsafe for enemy planes. (D219/2)

F415/5 is a pamphlet on the methods taught at the A.A. School. The principal subjects taught were engagement of low flying aircraft – mobile and static warfare – and elementary aircraft recognition. It is unclear whether Ryle wrote the pamphlet which he sent to Lord Cherwell himself.

Queen's College, Oxford

A letter from Ryle to his former tutor H. J. Paton, dated April 15 1926, is kept as part of the Paton archive at Queen's College Library.¹⁷⁸ The letter provides valuable insight in Ryle's earliest philosophical thoughts.¹⁷⁹

Collections outside Oxford

I have found only a few items outside Oxford, which is not surprising considering the fact that Ryle spent his entire academic life in Oxford. The Popper Collection of Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, and McMaster's Russell Archive contain correspondences with Ryle, mostly concerning *Mind*. Furthermore, I know of at least one unpublished paper, which was sold to an anonymous buyer via Lameduck Books in 2001 by Professor Samuel

¹⁷⁷ As well as one to his brother John A. Ryle (D220) and another to his brother Sir Martin Ryle (D221).

¹⁷⁸ I am grateful to Professor Brian McGuinness for bringing this to my attention.

¹⁷⁹ For the text and a detailed discussion of this letter see McGuinness and Vrijen 2006.

C. Wheeler III, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut.¹⁸⁰ The paper is a five-page unpublished holograph essay, entitled 'Consciousness', prepared by Ryle as a contribution to the Collier's Encyclopedia. Since Ryle was still working out his views on the matter at the time, the essay became much too long and technical for its intended purpose, and was in the end not included. It consists of almost 2000 words, with numerous corrections and emendations, written on five legal-size lined sheets. Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain a copy.

Ryle's books and papers at Linacre College

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, as a Fellow of Magdalen Ryle was a member of the committee which oversaw the establishment of Linacre as a college. He donated much of his library to this College when he retired in 1968, followed by another donation upon his death in 1976. These books and papers, together with the so-called 'red box' which contains letters, postcards, two notebooks and separate sheets of notes, form the 'Gilbert Ryle Collection'. At first Ryle's books did not receive separate treatment and could be borrowed like any other book. Today they are kept as a special collection in restricted and secured cabinets, only available upon request.

One should be careful not to attribute much significance to 'gaps' in Ryle's library. As Giles Barber, Linacre College's first librarian, has noticed, it is not clear what books Ryle owned other than the ones he donated to Linacre, since the circumstances of his donations are largely undocumented.¹⁸¹ It is obvious that some books are missing, for example published Bphil-theses that he supervised and in which he was thanked. Furthermore, there is no sign of copies of the *Blue and Brown Books*, of 'Notes on Logic' or Russell's *Theory of Knowledge*, which he must have possessed. And Ryle must have owned more novels than the collection contains. He was a great admirer of P. G. Wodehouse but the library does not contain any of his books.

The books in this collection are very much the working library of a philosopher of his day with wide-ranging interests. There are about 1100 volumes, some of which valuable, the earliest in date being an Aristotle of 1588. They include philosophical studies such as G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1922) and *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Aristotle, Plato, Bacon, Bergson, Descartes, Berkeley, Locke, Hume, Bolzano, Brentano, Lotze, Collingwood, Bosanquet, Husserl, Frege, Meinong, Russell and many others. Eighteenth-century English literature is also represented. The books and papers tell their own story of Ryle's personal and intellectual development throughout his life, containing, for example, books owned by his parents, books which he got for Christmas in the year he first went to college, books he bought when he was a don at Christ Church, and several presentation examples. He owned relatively many second-hand books. His copy of his great-great-grandfather John Charles Ryle's, *The Christian Leaders of England in the eighteenth century* had previously belonged to an E. J. Furlong from Trinity College Dublin. There are also non-philosophical

¹⁸⁰ Before he sold the manuscript he tried to find a Ryle archive in order to send a Xerox to it by posting a message on the internet (<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byform/mailling-lists/exlibris/1995/01/msg00012.html>). The fact that Wheeler did not know of the 'Gilbert Ryle Collection' at Linacre College and finally sold the manuscript to an anonymous buyer shows the need to report about the existence of this Ryle Collection.

¹⁸¹ Thus, Giles Barber in his paper 'A Philosopher and his books' in: *The Linacre Journal*, 1999, nr. 3, 17-26, which is the only paper about the 'Ryle Collection'.

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books, e.g. W. Robinson's *The English Flower Garden* (London 1893), which reflects Ryle's love of gardening, several issues of *Astounding Science Fiction* and Florence Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing: what it is and what it is not* (1860). Some books are heavily annotated, e.g. Ryle's three copies of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1922, 1951 and 1969), his copy of Husserl's *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, and Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*; others were not even cut open.

In his autobiographical essay Ryle mentioned the influence which his father's interest in philosophy had on him. Ryle was an avid reader and read many of the mainly philosophical and semi-philosophical books owned by his father. The 'Ryle Collection' contains several books that originally belonged to his father, e.g. late nineteenth-century editions of Aristotle, bearing his signature. Other examples of books that had clearly belonged to his father are: *The republic of Plato* (London 1879); *Lettres de Pascal* (Paris 1862); Karl Pearson's *The Grammar of Science* (1911), which contains a handwritten remark from the author on the first page: 'R. J. Ryle From the author with affectionate regards'; a translation of Mach's *Popular Scientific Lectures* (Chicago 1895); John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy* (London/Edinburgh 1892); a translation of Kant's *Prolegomena* and *Metaphysical Foundations of natural science* (London 1891); some Spinoza, such as Sir Frederick Pollock, *Spinoza his life and philosophy* (London/New York 1899); W. Wallace's, *Life of Arthur Schopenhauer* (London 1890); of course Arnauld's *The Port-Royal logic*; and T. H. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* (Oxford 1890).

R. J. Ryle did not only read philosophical works but also preceded his son by contributing to the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. He was in fact one of the first members of the *Aristotelian Society*. Some of the early volumes of the *Proceedings* contain papers or discussions by him. In volume 1 of the *Proceedings* (1888) R. J. Ryle is mentioned as a member and in the second volume from 1894 he has four contributions, one to a symposium concerning the question 'Does Law in Nature exclude the possibility of miracle?', one to a symposium concerning the question 'Is religion pre-supposed by morality, or morality by religion?', a paper 'The nature of force and matter', and another paper called 'Epictetus'. The 1933 volume, which contains his contribution to the symposium on Imaginary objects, is the first one bearing Gilbert Ryle's name.

Examples of books that originally belonged to other members of the Ryle-family are: Burnet's edition of the Greek text of Plato, 5 volumes (Oxford 1899), which had once belonged to E. Ryle (Ryle's sister Effie), who also owned Liddell & Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford 1883) which she had received from her mother's Union members of S. Hilda's, Newcastle; *Philosophical Lectures and Remains of Richard Lewis Nettleship* (London 1897) which was bought by a C.R. in 1898. And *Notes on Nursing* by Florence Nightingale was at one time owned by an Isabelle Ryle who bought or received it on 4 May 1880.

Ancient philosophy is well represented and so are the philosophical classics, e.g. works of Hobbes, Descartes, Leibniz, Locke and Berkeley. Ryle's library contains the works of Aristotle, translated into English under the editorship of W. D. Ross, all annotated slightly; 14 volumes of the translated works of Aristotle into English in the Loeb series, all slightly annotated as well. Further, Ryle owned Bekker's edition of the Greek text of Aristotle's *Opera* and *Metaphysica* from 1837; Aristotle's *Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, with a critical text and translation of 'the Poetics' by S. H. Butcher (London 1911). Aristotle's, *Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. I. Bywater (Oxford 1894 and 1897) contains many annotations.

In his paper about the Linacre Collection Giles Barber writes that 'it is surprising and unfortunate that the collection contains virtually nothing by Descartes, whether

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annotated by Ryle or not. Equally it may seem surprising to find no works by that very Oxford figure, John Locke.’ (Barber 1999, 21) However, the following books by Locke can be found on Ryle’s bookshelves:

- 1) Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter. H. Nidditch, Clarendon Press 1975. This book contains few marginal annotations, e.g. ‘faculties’ in the margin, mostly in book III.
- 2) Locke, *The Works of John Locke in four volumes*, seventh edition (1768). This could well have been one of his father’s books.
- 3) *Locke on Civil Government* (London 1884)
- 4) *Locke’s conduct of Human Understanding*, intr., notes, etc. by Thomas Fowler, 2 edition (Oxford 1882)
- 5) *An Early Draft of Locke’s Essay together with excerpts from his journals*, ed. R.I. Aaron and Jocelyn Gibb (eds.) (Oxford 1936), containing few marginal annotations, e.g. word ‘induction’ in the margin, and references to other philosophers such as Aristotle.

Barber’s claim that Ryle owned virtually nothing by Descartes is also incorrect. The collection clearly shows his interest in the works of Descartes. His copy of the French translation of Descartes’ *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* (Paris 1933) contains a receipt, showing that Ryle bought this book for 5 GBP on Feb. 13th 1933 when he was a lecturer at Christ Church. He bought it at Blackwell’s, together with Weldauer’s, *Kritik der Transzendentalphaenomenologie Husserls*. He had these books on approval, but he at least did not return the Descartes, though he did not read it (the pages are uncut). Ryle also owned, Descartes, *Discourse on Method. Meditations*. (Edinburgh and London 1890), which had belonged to his father. Further, Ryle owned a copy of Descartes’ *Lettres sur La Morale*, which is a correspondence with princes Elisabeth (Paris 1935). The first part was probably read by Ryle; the second is uncut. Ryle also read Elizabeth S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, (transl.), *The Philosophical works of Descartes*, volume 1 and 2 (Cambridge 1911). He rather heavily annotated volume 1. There are hardly any annotations in ‘The Passions of the Soul’. Some of his comments consist of several sentences, others only of a word, such as ‘induction’, or a name, such as ‘Aristotle’, or ‘Heraclitus’. Most are references to other philosophers. Volume 2 is missing from Linacre Library. There is also a copy of Boyce Gibson’s *The Philosophy of Descartes* (London 1932).

Numerous works by and about Brentano, Husserl, Meinong, Russell and Frege illustrate Ryle’s early interest in philosophers other than the commonly respected ones in Oxford at the time. Some of them are heavily annotated, such as Husserl’s *Logische Untersuchungen* (1922), which was bought by Ryle in 1926. Husserl’s *Philosophie der Arithmetik* (Leipzig 1891) and *Ideen zu einer reinen Phaenomenologie, Erster Band* (1922), which Ryle bought when he was a don at Christ Church, are also heavily annotated. In these books Ryle made his own index of names and subjects. With a few exceptions it seems that Ryle only made marginal notes. His annotations to Husserl’s writings are often short abstracts. Sometimes Ryle presents an example, such as, with respect to Husserl’s claim: “Wahr ist für jede Spezies urteilender Wesen, was nach ihrer Konstitution, nach ihren Denkgesetzen als wahr zu gelten haben” (LU1, 117). Ryle gives the following example: ‘What is true for men, false for cows’. Sometimes Ryle fills in names to make things more concrete and to connect Husserl’s words to the history of philosophical thought. On page 122 of *Logische Untersuchungen* he mentions Kant’s categories and

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Bolzano. Ryle's copies of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* were also heavily studied and annotated. They are discussed in Chapter 6.

The most interesting documents in the so-called 'red box', which is part of the 'Ryle Collection', are his notes on Wittgenstein. 'Ontological and Logical Talk in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*' is one of these documents – it was published by René Meyer in 1993. Others, still unpublished, are Ryle's notes on the structure of the *Tractatus* (included in this dissertation as Appendix 3); notes on 5.5.41; a bibliography of relevant readings to the *Tractatus*; and Ryle's comments on Wittgenstein's 'Notes on Logic' from 1913. Also worth mentioning are several letters and postcards to Ryle, e.g. a letter from Mabbott and a postcard written by Husserl, and two notebooks containing Ryle's lecture notes and first drafts of papers.